

Focus.

Safe driving is serious business.

Focused driving is keeping your eyes on the road ahead, your hands on the wheel and your mind on your driving.

"We've looked to see if we can find people who can talk on the phone and drive safely. There are 2% of people who might be as gifted as a skilled fighter pilot. But, we have yet to find anybody who can safely text and drive."

Dr. David Strayer, University of Utah

BEHAVIOR	INCREASED CRASH RISK
Texting	23 times
Reaching for a moving object	9 times
Driving drowsy	4 times
Looking at an external object	3.7 times
Reading	3.4 times
Using a cell phone	4 times*
Applying makeup	3 times

*since cell phone use occurs more frequently and for longer durations, this is the #1 source of driver inattention behind the wheel.

(Source: Virginia Tech Transportation Institute Naturalistic Driving Study, Relative Risk Estimates for Crash/Near Crash Inattention Events)

ATTENTION-GRABBING FACTS

- Distracted driving is the presence of anything that can distract a driver's physical and mental attention from driving.
- Studies indicate that distracted driving is a factor in more than 20% of crashes. This represents more than 300,000 crashes each year.¹
- Driver distraction was reported to have been involved in 16% of all fatal crashes in 2008.²
- In 2008, almost 6,000 people died and approximately 500,000 people were injured in crashes that were reported to have involved distraction.³
- A recent poll conducted by Nationwide Insurance indicated 98% of people feel they are safe drivers, yet nearly three-quarters report that they perform other tasks while driving.⁴
- Approximately 1.5 million drivers are using a cell phone at a given daylight moment.⁵
- It is estimated that a driver makes an average of 20 major decisions during every mile of driving, and drivers frequently have less than one-half second to act to avoid a collision.⁶
- A recent simulator study showed that drivers on cell phones look but fail to see up to 50% of the information in the driving environment.⁷
- Studies have indicated that text messaging on a cell phone while driving increased crash risk more than 23 times.⁸

1 NHTSA, 2009

2 An Examination of Driver Distraction as Recorded in NHTSA Databases. NHTSA, 2009

3 NHTSA, 2009

4 Nationwide Insurance Driving While Distracted Survey, 2008

5 NHTSA, 2008

6 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

7 University of Utah Simulator Study, 2008

8 Driver Distraction in Commercial Vehicle Operations. DOT FMCSA-RRR-09-042. Washington, DC: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2009

GOT KIDS?

Involve them in your commitment to drive focused

- Be sure they are properly secured in an age-appropriate child passenger safety restraint.
- Kids can be great enforcers. If they know your rule is "no phone calls while driving," they'll remind you to hang up if you slip up.
- Teach older children to answer calls for you. They can relay important messages or tell callers that you are driving and will return their call as soon as you are safely able to. They'll love the extra responsibility, and you'll be modeling good driving habits for them.
- Provide children with things to do (books, travel games, etc.) to distract them, so they're not distracting you.
- Got teens? Nearly 50% of today's teens have admitted to texting and driving¹, which increases the chances of crashing by 23 times. Be sure to establish strict rules with the appropriate sanctions regarding the use of mobile technologies while driving.
- Remember they'll do what you do. Even if your kids are far from the driving age, demonstrate now the behavior you'll expect later on from them. Set the right example concerning the use of cell phones and texting while driving and always be mindful of your precious cargo.

¹ Allstate Insurance Foundation, Shifting Teen Attitudes: The State of Teen Driving, 2009

TAKE ACTION AGAINST DISTRACTION

Turn your phone off when driving. Avoid the temptation to talk or text on your phone; simply turn it off while you are driving.

Texting and driving don't mix. There is no way to safely drive while texting. And, in most states, it's illegal. Texting that begins at a stoplight often carries over to when traffic is moving again. Even if you are proficient enough that you don't take your eyes off the road, your mind is off the road, and your hands are off the wheel. **JUST DON'T DO IT!**

Keep a safe following distance. Driver training experts suggest a following distance of 4 seconds. The 4-second following rule increases visibility and gives more time to react to what's happening in front of you, reducing risk to you and your passengers.

Be in control. On your personal vehicle, pre-set the climate control, radio and CD player. If driving an unfamiliar vehicle, take the time to identify the location of signals, wipers and lights.

Use technology to manage your technology. If you're having trouble breaking the habit of using a mobile device while driving, consider using a call blocking application to let callers know you are driving and to queue calls and texts until you are safely pulled over. Be sure to check with your insurance company; they may offer a policy discount.

Clear your mind. You cannot focus on driving if your mind is on work or family pressure, or your to-do list. Take a moment before you drive to get your mind focused on the task at hand — safely getting to your destination.

Have a plan. Don't wait until you are driving to plan and become familiar with your route. Consider using navigation devices with voice directions. Pull over to a safe location if you need to re-program your navigation system or consult printed directions.

Buckle yourself in on every trip. It's your best defense should you have a "run-in" with distracted drivers sharing the road with you. Be sure to also properly secure cargo including pets, potted plants and casseroles.

Help others help themselves. Make it a practice when you call someone's cell phone to ask if they are driving. If the response is "yes," take it upon yourself to call back later or ask them to return your call when they've reached their destination. If everyone did this, it would greatly reduce the number of distracted drivers sharing the roads.

Speak up. If you're a passenger and the driver is not focusing entirely on the road, don't be afraid to speak up! Offer to help with directions or even make a phone call on their behalf. You're looking out for your own safety, as well as that of the driver and those sharing the road with you.

Fine tune your tunes. Digital music devices (iPods, MP3 players) can pose a major distraction. Pre-set a driving playlist to provide continuous tunes without the need for adjustments. Also, it's dangerous and typically illegal to drive with headphones. Only use your device if it can be played over your vehicle's speakers.

Look at the big picture. Making or receiving a phone call while driving makes you four times more likely to be involved in a traffic crash. Take a moment to focus on those who are counting on you to get home safely every day before you make a choice to divert your full attention from the road.

Visit www.distraction.gov for more information.